

REPORTS OF STRANGE JOURNEYS

Today Eleanor Friede publishes books as an independent producer. One of her favorite authors is Robert Monroe, whose first book, *Journeys Out of the Body*, became a cult classic in 1971 and whose second, *Far Journeys*, came out in 1985. Monroe has transited through several careers — and worlds, too, if you believe his published accounts. Originally an electronics engineer, he later produced, directed, wrote, and composed the background music for more than four hundred radio programs, including “Rocky Gordon,” a popular railroad adventure series inspired by his own youthful stint as a hobo. Eventually he rose to vice president for programming at the Mutual Broadcasting System and later operated his own cable TV company in Virginia.

But Monroe began having strange, inexplicable experiences during his sleep. As he relates in *Journeys Out of the Body*, he found himself hovering ghostlike above his bed. In this detached, massless state, he claims, he was able with practice to pass through walls and travel down the street to visit sleeping friends and neighbors, gradually extending his nocturnal travels cross-country. In time, he reports, by inducing waves

of vibration in his body even during waking hours, "I could unhook myself from the physical with ridiculous ease." Soon, Monroe writes, he was venturing much farther afield and visiting the dead in the realm of "infinity and eternity."

Finally giving up broadcasting for full-time study of OOB (out-of-body experiences), he established the Monroe Institute of Applied Science in 1981 on 850 acres that he bought in the foothills of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains and named New Land. The key process employed there is Hemi-Sync, an acoustical system developed and patented by Monroe back in 1975 to induce OOB.

Hemi-Sync creates this altered state of mind by introducing a slightly different sound-wave frequency into each ear, thus building a synchronized resonance between the two hemispheres of the brain. More than three thousand people have already visited the institute to undergo OOB test hops in darkened cells called CHECs (Controlled Holistic Environmental Chambers) or to participate in brain-study workshops. Monroe now also markets Hemi-Sync sound-wave stereocassettes for relaxation, concentration, or for simply improving your golf or tennis game.

Eleanor Friede, who bought property and is building a country home at New Land, says that one problem Monroe faced in writing his new book, *Far Journeys*, was how to relay to readers what he claims was received by him in the world beyond via NVC (nonverbal communication). He describes NVC as "direct, instant experiencing, immediate knowing, transmitted from one intelligent energy system to another." Eventually, she explains, Monroe relayed the information in "thought balls," which precipitate intuition and understanding. Monroe's insights, says Friede, "will mean many things to many people, though those who require concrete proof will probably not go with them." But even Friede is hard-pressed to describe a thought ball. In *Far Journeys* a thought ball is defined as "a packet of thought/mentation, total memory."

Many distinguished scientists are discovering, as Monroe is convinced he did, that logic and common sense do not

always help gain new insights into the functioning of the universe. Their thesis is that we are all components of a whole that may not be perceptible except through intuition. British physicist Brian Josephson won a Nobel Prize in 1973 for discovering particles that pass like ghosts through supposedly impenetrable barriers (just as Monroe claims his detached mind did during its nightly forays through his neighbors' homes). Today, instead of physics, Josephson is concentrating on psychic phenomena. He claims there are simply too many things "ordinary physics doesn't take into account."